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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 004291

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [BG](#) [USAID](#)

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH: CHILD LABOR UPDATE 2005

REF: STATE 143552

11. Following is an update and review of the child labor report pegged to questions posed in reftel.

a) Bangladesh has not promulgated new laws or regulations on minimum age/s for employment since ratification of ILO Convention 182. In June 2003, the government listed 11 occupations as the worst forms of child labor: sexual acts, smuggling, bidi (a form of local cigarette), battery and chemical factories, glass factories, tanneries, salt factories, transport, rag picking, welding, arms and drug trafficking, and slavery in any forms.

b) ILO and child rights NGO leaders believe that Bangladesh has adequate laws and regulations for the implementation and enforcement of proscriptions against the worst forms of child labor, although some laws/regulations may need updating. Implementation of the laws and regulations, however, remains poor in many cases. The office of the Chief Inspector of Factories under the Department of Labor is primarily responsible for implementing and enforcing child labor laws and regulations. Inspectors have the authority to inspect and seize factories, file cases, and impose fine. The total number of inspectors at present is 88, 46 for factories and 42 for shops and establishments, while the number of registered factories is about 21,500. According to local ILO officials, a joint monitoring team comprising officials from Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers Exporters Association (BGMEA), ILO, and the BDG Office of the Chief Inspectors of Factories regularly inspects over 4000 member factories of BGMEA. From January-July 2005, the joint team found nine child laborers working in five factories, and each factory was fined the local currency equivalent of \$100, the maximum allowable under the law. The government trains the inspectors in cooperation with child rights NGOs.

c) The BDG has worked with NGOs and international organizations to launch campaigns against child labor in hazardous activities, promoted education for children, and geared up counter-trafficking monitoring and awareness campaigns. It is cooperating with the ILO and NGOs in their efforts to withdraw children from the street and work and place them in schools. The Bangladesh government provides cash incentives to families who send children to schools. According to 2002 BDG statistics, 97.5 per cent of the school-age children were enrolled in primary schools, although there are no reliable government figures for student actually attending classes. Under Bangladesh law, children must attend school through the fifth grade. The current government policy is to implement compulsory primary education by the year 2015.

d) The Ministry of Labor and Employment has drafted a comprehensive policy aimed at the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in consultation with labor and child rights organizations. But the government is yet to approve and officially promulgate the policy.

e) Labor and child rights activists report that the BDG is getting more engaged in child labor issues with increased awareness campaigns. According to ILO officials, working children are still conspicuous in all aspects of life in both urban and rural Bangladesh. The withdrawal of child laborers from the apparel sector to provide them basic education and to some extent, vocational training, under the joint auspices of ILO, UNICEF and BGMEA has been touted as an exemplary program internationally. The fact remains, however, that the apparel children were involved in non-hazardous work and made up only one per cent of the total child labor force in Bangladesh.

12. Corrections/Updates on 2003 text:

Government Policies and programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor:

The Ministry of Labor and Employment has implemented projects to combat child labor in selected industries with support from USDA and not from USAID.

In 2003, Bangladesh ratified the Convention on Prevention

and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for prostitution that it had signed with other South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries in January 2002.

Since mid-June, the BDG has significantly stepped up monitoring of human trafficking activities and the prosecution of cases related to trafficking in children and women.

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Post is not aware of any cases of sale of organs of children trafficked from Bangladesh. There is a perception among officials and rights activists that the incidence of trafficking in children and women is decreasing, in part because the BDG increased its counter-trafficking efforts in June 2004.

CHAMMAS